

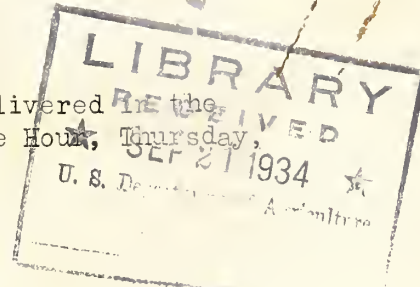
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WEATHER AND CROPS

A radio talk by J. B. Kincer, Weather Bureau, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period, National Farm and Home Hour, Thursday, September 6, 1934.



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At the time of our last weather talk, a month ago, the Midwestern States were sweltering through what happily proved to be the remnant of the most severe heat wave this country has ever experienced. However, at that time, temperatures had already become decidedly lower in the Northwest and soon after the middle of August the heat wave was definitely broken over the Midwest. The last ten days of August were decidedly cool in all Central and Northern States east of the Rocky Mountains. As frequently happens with the weather, one extreme followed another. In this case, the swing from hot to cool weather was over a wide range; from temperatures almost constantly playing around the 100-mark day after day over large areas, to freezing weather by the morning of August 24 in some centralnorthern districts. Since then there has been more or less frost in exposed places from northern New England westward to North Dakota.

The cool wave ushered out an extremely hot summer, especially for the midwestern portions of the country. In many western localities during the summer months maximum temperatures of 100°, or higher, became the rule for long periods of time, rather than the rare exception as in the average run of years. For example, during the months from June to August, Des Moines had 22 days with temperatures reaching the century mark or higher; Columbia, Mo., 34 days; Topeka, Kans., 47; Oklahoma City, 45; and Fort Smith, Ark., 53. By way of comparison, we may mention that Des Moines for the summer of 1933, which also was decidedly warmer than normal, had only four days with 100° or over, against 22 days this last summer; while Columbia, Mo., had only one day last year and 34 days this summer when such temperatures were registered. Another example: In Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska the excess in temperature above normal for the three summer months was nearly twice as great as that for the previous hottest summer of record.

Now let us turn to the other principal weather factor - rainfall. A month ago we had to paint a gloomy word-picture with regard to the drought situation. At that time there had been some helpful showers in the Ohio Valley States, but they had been irregular and spotted, without general relief, while in nearly all sections west of the Mississippi River conditions were extremely bad. Happily, at the present time, the outlook is much brighter in many places. In the Ohio Valley showers became more frequent, as August progressed, and soon after the middle of the month generous rains began to fall over considerable areas of the parched Southwest, centering in Missouri, but soon spreading westward and southwestward over the southern Great Plains. In the meantime, favorable growing conditions continued in the Southeast and most of the Atlantic States.

For the last week the outstanding weather feature was the general rain, in amounts sufficient to relieve droughty conditions, over most

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sections between the Mississippi River and Rocky Mountains. The entire area from southern Minnesota and Nebraska southward; received generous showers, the most helpful feature of which is an improvement in soil moisture conditions that will greatly facilitate the seeding of winter wheat in these areas, comprising the principal producing sections. Except locally, the top soil is now in good condition for the preparation of seed beds, which is being pushed. Seeding is already in full swing in the western third of Kansas and will expand rapidly into other sections. However, in the northern Great Plains, the soil continues too dry for working and in the Pacific Northwest preparations for fall seeding are still awaiting rain. In Atlantic States about normal conditions prevail with regard to the seeding of winter grains.

Additional showers in the Ohio Valley also have been beneficial for fall pastures, late truck crops, and in conditioning the soil, while most of the Lake region had helpful rains. In general, the weather continues favorable in the east Gulf and Atlantic States, except that it has been too dry and cold in the North, especially in much of New England and northern and western New York. There was more or less frost damage this past week in Vermont, central New York, and in some northern districts farther west.

In the more western States there has been but little improvement, as a rule. Additional showers brought further relief to much of New Mexico and most of Arizona, and locally to some sections farther north. Otherwise, conditions continue generally unfavorable from the Dakotas westward and in the Great Basin. Continued dryness in the far Northwest has increased the fire hazard and the air is smoky from burning forests. There is some improvement in the water situation in the Imperial Valley of California.

In the eastern Corn Belt some late corn continues to improve, which is also the case in favored spots farther west, especially in the lower Mississippi Valley. Cool weather during the past 10 days has slowed up progress in maturity, but much of the crop is now safe from frost. In Iowa, progress in corn development has been slow because of cool, cloudy, wet weather, but much is well along toward maturity. In the Ohio Valley the condition of the crop remains decidedly variable, but in the more eastern States it is mostly good. In general, the midwest rains came too late to be of material benefit to the corn crop.

The range situation continues extremely bad in the Northwest from the Dakotas westward, while recent hot, dry weather has intensified unfavorable conditions in much of the Great Basin. In the central Rocky Mountain area the range shows improvement only locally, but in the Southwest, especially in much of Arizona and New Mexico, conditions have become decidedly better. In the interior valleys fall pastures show further improvement, though in some midwestern sections they were too far gone to revive. In the more eastern States pastures are mostly good.